

AUG 2 1995

AUG 28 1995

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

historic name Brother Jonathan

other names/site number _____

2. LOCATION

street & number N/A not for publication N/A

city or town Crescent City - Offshore vicinity X

state California code CA county Del Norte code 015 zip code N/A

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

August 16, 1995
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register.

 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the National Register.

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the National Register.

 removed from the National Register.

 other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

5/21/02

AUG 28 1995

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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Signature of certifying official

August 16, 1995
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

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<u> </u> entered in the National Register. <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register. <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
1	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
1	0 Total

State of California
State Lands Commission

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ N/A _____

_____ 0 _____

Please see continuation sheet

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Transportation</u>	Sub: <u>Water related</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Not in use</u>	Sub: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ N/A _____

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see continuation sheet

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Archaeology - historic
- Architecture
- Commerce
- Engineering
- Exploration/Settlement
- Transportation

Period of Significance

1850 - 1865

Significant Dates

July 30, 1865

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Perrine, Patterson & Stack

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see continuation sheet

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bibliography *"Please see footnotes cited in the text (at end of document)."*

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: 19.5 acres consisting of a circle with radius of 5,200 feet with a center point at coordinates 41° 46' 29" N - 124° 20' 50" W.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
					_____ See continuation sheet.		

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

****Please see continuation sheet****

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

****Please see continuation sheet****

11. FORM PREPARED BY the Staff of the State Lands Commission

Narrative Description and Statement of Significance researched and written by

name/title James P. Delgado, Executive Director - Vancouver Maritime Museum

organization (for) State Lands Commission date July 5, 1995

street & number 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South telephone (916) 574-1850

city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95825

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

NOAA - National Ocean Service Chart No. 18603

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Video tape, "The Brother Jonathan Found," October 1993

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name State of California - State Lands Commission

street & number 100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South telephone (916) 574-1850

city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95825

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

SECTION 5 - CLASSIFICATION

Brother Jonathan
Del Norte, California

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Deep Sea Research, Inc., a treasure salvor, is currently contesting the State's ownership of the vessel and is seeking the right to salvage it for its economic value. An appeal from the Federal District Court for the Northern District of California is pending before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. A decision is anticipated in the early 1996.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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SECTION 7 - DESCRIPTION

Brother Jonathan
Del Norte, California

The substantially intact archaeological remains of the sidewheel steamer BROTHER JONATHAN lie south of St. George Reef, approximately four and one half miles off the Del Norte County coastline of California.

BROTHER JONATHAN AS BUILT AND MODIFIED, 1850-1865

As built in 1850, BROTHER JONATHAN was a 1,359 52/95-ton, two-masted sidewheel steamer. The vessel's registered dimensions were 220 feet, 11 inches in length, with a 36-foot beam, and a 21-foot depth of hold. The New York HERALD of November 27, 1850, commenting on the steamer, described the construction of the hull:

Her floors are solid, 14 inches in depth, bolted together with 1-3/4" iron; five keelsons and head pieces caged and bolted to the solid floor. The frame, at the turn of the bilge, is peculiar for its great strength, being additionally secured by strong iron diagonal braces, forming a perfect network from stem to stern; over which is laid yellow pine planking from five to eight inches thick and all square fastened. The decks are of the most substantial description, being thoroughly secured with lodging and hanging knees. The outside is planked with white oak, and well treenailed and copper fastened. She has a billet-head and bowsprit, which give her a most neat and beautiful finish.

The JOURNAL OF THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, reporting on BROTHER JONATHAN in May 1851, corroborated the dimensions reported in the HERALD and noted that the hull was built of "live oak, white oak, locust and cedar, secured by diagonal braces of flat iron bar 5 feet apart, 4-1/2 inches wide by 3/4, and extending from stem to stern. [1]

An 1851 painting of the steamer shows her as built with a modified barkentine rig, a single stack abaft the foremast but forward of the sidewheels, a straight bow and a round stern. A pump brake windlass is carried at the bow along with a capstan. The bow was ornamented with trailboards and a billethead. The hull was painted black with a blue wale and buff deckhouses. The main deckhouse was located amidships, and was surrounded by the prominent "walking beam" of the engine; a smaller house, located forward and between the stack and foremast served as the wheelhouse. The wheelboxes, as shown in the painting, are black and red, with gilt eagles on the side panels. The stern also carries a gilded eagle. The painting shows BROTHER JONATHAN equipped with four lifeboats, two immediately forward and two abaft the wheels. [2]

The New York HERALD reported in 1850 that "her saloon will be fitted up in a chaste but elegant style, with panelling being white enamel and gold, and her arrangements for ventilation are most excellent." [3] As built, BROTHER JONATHAN had accommodations for 365 passengers, most below decks in the steerage. E.S. Capron, aboard the steamer PROMETHEUS in 1853, described that near-sister of BROTHER JONATHAN's steerage; "it is situated in the very bottom of the vessel; a damp, dark poorly ventilated hole. Here, often, from three to five hundred human beings are congregated for a voyage....." [4] Better accommodations were found on the next, or 'tween deck. The main saloon was a 70-foot long compartment lined with 24 staterooms, twelve on each beam. Franklin Langworthy, a passenger aboard BROTHER JONATHAN in April 1853, noted the steamer had berths for 500 passengers;

the saloon is below the main deck, towards the stern, and is about eighty feet in length by twenty feet in width, surrounded by staterooms having doors of panell [sic] work, ornamented with gildings....The floor is carpeted with oil-cloth carpeting of bright and variegated colors. The seats consist of chairs and settees with crimson cushions. [5]

BROTHER JONATHAN's sidewheels were driven by a single beam engine. This type of engine, usually employed on river and sound steamers, had recently been introduced to ocean steamers. The engines, manufactured by T.F. Secor and Co., were originally from the Long Island Sound steamer ATLANTIC, wrecked off Fisher's island near New London, Connecticut on November 26, 1846. Salvaged from the wreck, they were rebuilt by the Morgan Ironworks of New York and installed in BROTHER JONATHAN.

The JOURNAL OF THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, commenting on the recent installation of beam engines in BROTHER JONATHAN and four other steamships, noted the controversial nature of the installation. "The objection urged against this form of engine has been, that it elevates the center of gravity" through the introduction of the large "walking beam," a 10-ton casting elevated "12 to 15 feet above the deck." However, the weight of the boilers, and other machinery counter-balanced the walking beam. Thus, the "recent introduction of the ordinary beam engine of our river boats into several sea steamers of magnitude has been so far attended with complete success," and gradually replaced the earlier favorite, the sidelever engine. [6] The JOURNAL noted BROTHER JONATHAN's engine had a 72-inch diameter cylinder with an 11-foot stroke. The 400-h.p. engine drove two 33-foot diameter paddlewheels with a nine-foot face and 30-inch deep paddles. Steam was provided by two coal-fired shell boilers 12 feet in diameter and 28 feet long. [7]

In March 1852, BROTHER JONATHAN was altered by a new owner to carry more passengers. The bulwarks were raised and accommodations were increased to 750 berths. The deckhouses were cut back forward, opening the bow, which was rebuilt to a straight stem with an enlarged well and forecastle. The deckhouse was extended aft to the fantail, adding accommodations, and the stack was relocated aft to amidships from its earlier, forward position. A third mast, a fore and aft rigged mizzen, was added. The appearance of BROTHER JONATHAN after this modification is best captured in an engraving of an unnamed steamer, possibly BROTHER JONATHAN, that appears on the cover of Hutchings' California Magazine for January 1858. [8]

In 1858, BROTHER JONATHAN was strengthened with the introduction of 6,000 new iron bolts in the hull. The ship was again hauled and rebuilt in May 1861 at San Francisco. The hull planking was removed, two bilge keelsons and a reinforcing false keel were added, and the hull planks were replaced with Oregon oak and copper sheathed. The editors of the San Francisco DAILY ALTA CALIFORNIA commented that she looked "for all the world like the skeleton of some antediluvian megatherium or mastodon raked out of the ruins of an extinct creation...." [9]

The machinery was overhauled and the boilers were replaced with two patented Martin tubular boilers with six furnaces. The accommodations below and on deck were rebuilt to increase cargo capacity to 900 tons of freight. The saloon was ripped out and replaced by a new one, panelled in California redwood and 120 feet long. Plans announced in the DAILY ALTA CALIFORNIA called for all passenger accommodations to be located on the main deck, with family suites and double cabins. [10]

An 1863 photograph of San Francisco's waterfront as seen from Telegraph Hill captured BROTHER JONATHAN at anchor off the Broadway Street wharf and shows her as she appeared after the rebuild and at the time of her loss in 1865. The hull's lines are unchanged. The vessel is rigged as barkentine with three masts, with an elevated pilothouse immediately forward of the stack. [11]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF BROTHER JONATHAN

Observations on the archaeological remains of BROTHER JONATHAN are based solely on a video reconnaissance conducted with a remotely operated vehicle in 1993; additional reconnaissance, still photography, and the preparation of a site map have yet to be conducted. The observed characteristics of the site, however, as well as its location, indicate that the identity of the wreck is BROTHER JONATHAN.

The wreck lies embedded in the sand and silt bottom at a depth of some 250 feet off St. George Reef, and to the southeast of Jonathan Rock. The wreck lies inside a Court-injuncted zone near Dragon Channel. The wreck is clear and visible on side-scan sonar as a linear target with a slightly curved, "ship" shape.

The principal feature on the site is a substantial portion of the lower hull for an estimated two-thirds of the steamer's original length, which has survived to a level below the original waterline. The hull appears to be resting to port, with the outer hull planking and copper sheathing protruding from the bottom. Video reconnaissance shows surviving ceiling planking and the exposed ends of floors and frames. The line of separation on the hull appears to be close to the turn of the bilge in some areas, with some frames and upper hull resting at an angle on the bottom where they have separated from the floors.

Visible portions of the ship's diagonal iron strapping are evident, and a layer of iron concretion covers many exposed timbers, perhaps accounting for the survival of substantial timber remains. The upper hull has apparently been consumed by marine organisms, as evidenced by the presence of exposed large drifts and other fasteners, in some cases with partially consumed timber adhering to it. The unconsumed portions, impregnated with oxides, are a common indicator of organic activity. While a layer of silt covers many timbers as well, and bottom sediments are probably dynamic, cyclic burial and uncovering are unlikely at the site given the presence of a substantial colony of anemones.

Machinery exposed on the site includes the port paddlewheel shaft, with hubs. The arms are missing. Inside the hull, the engine machinery is present, although displaced. The cylinder lies on its side, separated from the bedplate, with the D-valve exposed. The boilers are present, although the jacket of one has apparently corroded, exposing articulated rows of boiler tubes. What appears to be the heat exchanger lies near the exposed boiler. Various steam lines, rods and shafts lie disarticulated inside the hull and in this area.

A number of ceramic artifacts lie scattered outside the hull and inside it. At or after the time of the vessel's, a ceramic gun bottle, a dark glass wine bottle and ceramic plates with New York maker's marks were recovered. Rows of other plates, bowls, and a chamber pot were observed on site, some of them lying atop exposed floor and ceiling timbers and on frame ends. Their presence may represent post-sinking deposition as intact structure was consumed by marine organisms. The appearance of the wreck is that of a vessel that sank more or less intact and has slowly disintegrated through organic activity, leaving a number of artifacts in relative position to their original placement in the vessel. This argues for a high level of archaeological integrity and research value as the site formation process was, after sinking damage, apparently gentle and gradual.

FOOTNOTES. SECTION 7

1

Journal of the Franklin Institute, Vol. XXL, No. 5, (Third Series), May 1851, p. 354.

2

Oil painting, "Brother Jonathan," by James Bard (1815-1897), dated 1851, collection of the Griswold Inn, Essex, Connecticut.

3

New York HERALD, November 27, 1850.

4

E.S. Capron, History of California... (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1854), p. 247.

5

Franklin Langworthy, Scenery of the Plains, Mountains and Mines, ed. Paul C. Phillips. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 217.

6

Journal of the Franklin Institute, Vol. XXL, No. 6, (Third Series), June 1851, pp. 419-420.

7

Journal of the Franklin Institute, Vol. XXL, No. 5, (Third Series), May 1851, p. 354.

8

"The Steamer Has Arrived," Hutchings' California Magazine, Vol. II, No. 7, January 1858, p. 1.

9

San Francisco Daily Alta California, May 4, 1861.

10

ibid.

11

Photograph, "Harbour & Anchorage, San Francisco," (1863), photograph A12.15237 pl, National Maritime Museum, San Francisco.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

SECTION 8 - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brother Jonathan
Del Norte, California

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The substantially intact, archaeological remains of the steamship BROTHER JONATHAN are a NATIONALLY significant entity under criterion A, C and D. Built in New York in 1850 for Atlantic service to Panama at the height of the California Gold Rush (1848-1855), BROTHER JONATHAN was sent to the Pacific in 1852 to serve on the Nicaragua Route. BROTHER JONATHAN operated between Nicaragua and San Francisco, carrying passengers and freight, until 1856. BROTHER JONATHAN was then sold and entered a new career as one of the region's first coastal passenger and freight steamers between 1858 and 1865. The development of San Francisco and other Pacific coast ports between California and Puget Sound was made possible by regular steam service between them.

BROTHER JONATHAN also played a significant role in the development of trade and commerce on the coast; according to historian Alfred Lomax, BROTHER JONATHAN and other early coastal steamships "were literally the commercial arteries of the Pacific Coast economy, carrying vital products of mine, forest, farm and factory to expanding consumption centers extending from California to British Columbia." BROTHER JONATHAN also served in two later Pacific Coast gold rushes, the first to British Columbia in 1858, when she also carried the first group of emigrating black Californians escaping persecution, and the second to Idaho-bound passengers in 1862. The tremendous loss of life and the social impact of BROTHER JONATHAN's wreck in 1865 conferred additional importance to the vessel as the worst maritime disaster in California waters, and one of the worst maritime disasters on the Pacific Coast.

A number of the vessels engaged in the early Pacific coastal trade were Gold Rush veterans like BROTHER JONATHAN. The well-preserved structure and machinery of the ship at the site are a significant entity in their form and design. BROTHER JONATHAN's walking beam marine steam engine, essentially unaltered during the vessel's 15-year career, was a significant departure from the side-lever engines of earlier ocean-going steamers, and the well-preserved hull's lines and form, retained through an 1861 rebuild, evidenced a transition from the sailing ship-inspired hulls of contemporary steam vessels to a straight-stemmed hull that foreshadowed later steamship hull forms. BROTHER JONATHAN sank into deep water and was not relocated until recently. The lack of salvage or other disturbance confers a high level of archaeological integrity. The remains of BROTHER JONATHAN are the best preserved of any Gold Rush steamer on the Pacific Coast, including the National Register-listed TENNESSEE, WINFIELD SCOTT, or YANKEE BLADE. BROTHER JONATHAN's wreck also comprises the only known and located remains of one of these vessels as modified for use as an early Pacific coastal steamer.

This statement of significance is based on the more detailed discussion which follows.

BROTHER JONATHAN'S GOLD RUSH CAREER, 1850-1857

Between December 1848 and December 1849, more than 1,000 vessels cleared world ports for California in response to the news that gold had been discovered on the banks of the American River. While large numbers of gold seekers crossed the North American continent by foot, on horseback, or by wagon, a greater number came by sailing ship or steamer. The transportation of people was exceeded by the volume of tonnage in vessels carrying cargoes to California markets.

The California gold discovery revived a centuries old sea route linking the Pacific and Caribbean oceans as tens of thousands of gold seekers crossed the narrow breadth of Central America at Panama and Nicaragua and booked passage in ships to San Francisco. The trade was dominated at first by the Pacific Mail Steamship, on the Pacific, and the United States Mail Steamship Company, on the Atlantic, but the profits to be made on the Panama route and the seeming inability of the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. to adequately handle the large number of persons awaiting passage to San Francisco inspired a number of entrepreneurs to compete for the business of isthmian travellers.

Considerable competition to the Pacific Mail came from organizers of "opposition lines" of steamships, and proved, in the words of historian John Haskell Kemble, to be "bitter and ruthless....the chief characteristic of steamship operation on the Panama route," replete with fare wars, angry denunciations and lawsuits. [1]

The earliest competitors of the Pacific Mail were the New York firm of J. Howard and Son, southern shipping magnate Charles Morgan, and the United States Mail Steamship Co., which was apparently not content with just the Atlantic side of the operation—but then the Pacific Mail was not content to operate solely in the Pacific. The feud between the U.S. and Pacific Mail resulted in both sending steamers to encroach on the other's territory and only ended when the two companies traded the steamers plying each others' waters and exchanged stock. The two companies began cooperating with one another, selling jointly issued tickets. [2] The greatest challenge to the Pacific Mail, and indeed, the Panama Route, came from "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York. After trying to compete with the Pacific Mail in Panama, Vanderbilt opened a new route by way of Nicaragua.

While California-bound immigrants crossed Nicaragua as early as 1849, the heyday of the route was 1851-1855. Although wider than Panama, Nicaragua boasted the more easily navigated San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, which supposedly made for an easier passage confined more to steamer than mule or canoe, although both were frequently employed on the Nicaragua route as well as in Panama. While hoping to take over the lucrative California trade from both the Pacific Mail and the isthmus of Panama, Vanderbilt also hoped to build a trans-isthmian canal in Nicaragua and thus capture a prize already more than a decade along in discussion and dreams.

Commencing operations in December 1850 with the steamer PROMETHEUS, Vanderbilt ordered the 613-ton sidewheel steamer INDEPENDENCE built by William H. Brown in New York for the Pacific. Launched with the engines and boilers in place and with steam up on Christmas Day 1850, Vanderbilt's new present steamed for the Pacific on January 13, 1851. Followed by the 1,003-ton sidewheel steamer PACIFIC, purchased from the United States Mail Steamship Co., INDEPENDENCE inaugurated through service on the Nicaragua route. PACIFIC arrived first, however, and in July 1851 the line officially opened. [3]

Gradually the Nicaragua route was monopolized by Vanderbilt, who employed seven steamers by early 1852. The line prospered, offering serious competition to the Pacific Mail. Although the number of passengers going by way of Nicaragua never surpassed those passing over the Isthmus of Panama, considerable business was lost to Vanderbilt; in 1851 only 4,971 passengers crossed Nicaragua as compared to 29,653 crossing Panama, but in 1852 the gap narrowed with 17,403 Nicaragua passengers to 33,108 Panama passengers, closing with 23,957 to 27,246 in 1853. [4] Part of Vanderbilt's failure to make more of Nicaragua was his inattention to passenger comfort.

Passengers protested unsanitary and unsafe conditions on the Nicaragua steamers, including a parade in San Francisco in which passengers carried a Vanderbilt effigy with a placard labelled "Vanderbilt's Death Line" hanging from its neck. Ill-feeling bolstered by several unfortunate disasters – the loss of the steamers NORTH AMERICA, S.S. LEWIS, and INDEPENDENCE, the latter with considerable loss of life—did little to help. The Nicaragua route all but closed when the completion of the Panama Railroad and warfare in Nicaragua engendered by the filibustering activities of Yankee adventurer William Walker plunged the country into turmoil. In 1856, only 8,053 passengers crossed Nicaragua, as opposed to the 30,335 who went by way of Panama. [5]

BROTHER JONATHAN was built for shipping entrepreneur Edward Mills by the New York firm of Perrine, Patterson & Stack. Launched on November 2, the steamer, termed "unique in her construction and her name" was reported lying at the Morgan Iron Works' wharf at the end of the month, "receiving her machinery." The New York HERALD, noting the new steamer's construction, reported that Mill's had personally superintended the vessel's building, and had "spared neither pain nor expense...." [6] Mills built BROTHER JONATHAN for the Panama Route, and in early 1851 the steamer sailed for Chagres on her maiden voyage. Mill's operation of the steamer was plagued by misfortune; in November 1851, two hundred of BROTHER JONATHAN's passengers were stranded at Panama when their connecting steamer on the Pacific failed to arrive. The following voyage also failed to meet the Pacific steamer, stranding another group of BROTHER JONATHAN's passengers. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company refused to honor Mill's lesser-priced tickets, compounding the problem.

Mills hastened his own demise by at first refusing refunds and arrogantly asserting that "California passengers must admit that I have reduced the passage one half, since I commenced running the steamer Brother Jonathan; and, if they had met with some little detention on the Pacific side, which is rather beyond my control, they will, upon reflection, give me credit for some advantage to themselves...." [7] Mill's business declined, and in March 1852, he sold BROTHER JONATHAN to Cornelius Vanderbilt. BROTHER JONATHAN had already operated on the Nicaragua route, making two voyages, one from Nicaragua to New York in October, and another from New York to Nicaragua in December 1851. The October voyage added to Mill's bad public relations when BROTHER JONATHAN's captain charged passengers who had missed the sailing of the steamer DANIEL WEBSTER a high fare for berths on the already overcrowded ship without adequate provisions. They arrived in New York describing BROTHER JONATHAN as "a moving pestilence, whose putrid carcass was strewn with the dead and dying during the passage...." [8]

In answer to this complaint, once Vanderbilt purchased BROTHER JONATHAN, he had the steamer's accommodations enlarged to carry as many as 750 passengers. On May 14, 1852, the rebuilt BROTHER JONATHAN sailed from New York for San Francisco, by way of Rio de Janeiro, the Straits of Magellan, Valparaiso, Chile, Panama and San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua. BROTHER JONATHAN encountered rough weather in the straits and lost two anchors and a kedge and arrived at Valparaiso short of coal and wood. The steamer reached Panama on September 3, 1852, 113 days out of New York, where she took on supplies and passengers before sailing on September 13. She reached San Juan del Sur on September 22, and finally arrived at San Francisco on October 5 to commence a new, Pacific Coast career.

BROTHER JONATHAN began regular voyages between San Francisco and San Juan del Sur on November 1, arriving back at the Golden Gate at the end of her first round-trip run on December 3, 1852. E. S. Capron, arriving at San Francisco aboard BROTHER JONATHAN on May 21, 1853, wrote how BROTHER JONATHAN tied up at Pacific Street wharf at the end of each voyage:

All is bustle and confusion. The mate is hoarsely giving the order to 'make fast,' and the sailors, in obedience, are busy with the ropes and cables. The wharf is crowded with the multitude, hand-carts, drays, and hacks. Many persons are pressing their way on board in search of expected friends, and the weary passengers are collecting their valuables, and preparing to bid the good steamer a joyful farewell. [9]

The previous month, Franklin Langworthy had sailed from San Francisco for home, via San Juan del Sur, aboard BROTHER JONATHAN. As the 565 passengers crowded the decks, "thousands on thousands thronged the Pacific Wharf to watch our departure. The steam had been generating for two hours, hawsers were unfastened and now taken in, the ponderous wheels began to roll, and the stately ship shot into the Bay, amidst the shouts of the passengers, responsive to the cheers of the thousands on shore." [10]

Langworthy compared BROTHER JONATHAN's saloon to the "drawing room of an imperial palace." In addition to comfort, he also praised the cuisine. "To keep up the supply of fresh meat, we have on board eight or ten beef cattle, a number of swine, besides a small lot of sheep....We have plenty of potatoes, both sweet and of the common kind. Onions, lettuce &c., fresh as if just brought from the garden. Fish, fresh and salt, crabs and lobsters, fresh veal and mutton preserved in cans, geese and ducks, and other fowls kept in ice, and dried fruits and nuts are on the table at every meal." [11]

BROTHER JONATHAN made thirteen voyages to and from San Francisco and San Juan del Sur in 1853, seven in 1854, none in 1855, and two in 1856. [12] Vanderbilt sold his interest in BROTHER JONATHAN and his other steamers to his partners in the Accessory Transit Company in December 1852, just after BROTHER JONATHAN's first arrival at San Francisco. The steamer remained under the Accessory Transit Company's flag until 1857, operating for various agents. In October 1854, BROTHER JONATHAN was dispatched to southern California to bring survivors of the wrecked Accessory Transit Co. steamer YANKEE BLADE back to San Francisco. The grim assignment was a harbinger of worse days to come. In February 1856, President Rivas of Nicaragua annulled the Accessory Transit Company's charter, ending their operation on the Nicaragua Route. When she sailed in March 1856, BROTHER JONATHAN was the last of the company's steamers to depart from San Juan del Sur. [13]

BROTHER JONATHAN'S COASTAL CAREER, 1857-1865

BROTHER JONATHAN was sold in early 1856 to Captain John Thomas Wright of San Francisco, and renamed **COMMODORE**. Operated by Wright as part of his Merchant's Accommodation Line, **COMMODORE** connected San Francisco with Oregon, Washington and British Columbia ports in direct competition with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. [14] The steamer was condemned as "bad and unseaworthy and sadly needing repairs" in November by the Port Warden of San Francisco. [15] The steamer was hauled and repaired in early 1858.

News that gold had been discovered in British Columbia on the banks of the Fraser River reached California in February 1858. The news excited many, inasmuch as the California Gold Rush-inspired boom in the state was waning. According to one contemporary historian, "the whole of California in April 1858 was in a ferment. Business in the interior was deranged, and in many places broken up. Hundreds too impatient to wait for the steamers mounted horses and hastened overland....While towns in the interior were being deserted, San Francisco derived the benefit of the influx and the outfitting of the miners, and the shipper rejoiced at the prospects of the Fraser trade." [16]

Returning from British Columbia, **COMMODORE** arrived at San Francisco on April 10, 1858 with confirmation of the discovery, sparking a new gold rush. Wright immediately advertised a sailing on April 20 "For the new gold mines on Frazer's River...touching at Mendocino, Trinidad, Crescent City, Port Orford, and Victoria, Vancouver's Island...." [17] It was the first of several sailings north to British Columbia, a service that **COMMODORE** inaugurated.

The news of the sailing came to the attention of the congregation of San Francisco's African Zion Methodist Episcopal Church. Although admitted to the Union as a "free" state, California's southern democratic politicians had passed a number of restrictive laws. Blacks could not testify in court against a white man. Fugitive slaves could be arrested and sent back to slavery. This had led to a famous court case, in which slave Archie Lee successfully fought for his freedom after years in California. In the aftermath of the Lee case, the California state legislature introduced bills that banned further immigration of free blacks to the state, and ruled that any black "sojourning" in California with his master would remain a slave. In the face of further persecution, the black congregation of the church met on April 14 to debate immigration to Mexico or British Columbia.

When **COMMODORE** steamed for Victoria on April 20, sixty-five members of the church sailed with her. **COMMODORE** arrived at Victoria on April 25, with 400 passengers. She was the first American vessel to reach British Columbia with gold seekers. Dr. J. S. Helmcken, a prominent resident of Victoria, also remarked on the arrival of "black emigrants, from the 'land of the free and the home of the slave.' These, 'like the pilgrim fathers of old,' kneeling on the ground, prayed and blessed it as the true land of freedom and their future home. They called for blessings on the flag that floated above the fort..." [18] In the next few months, some four hundred California blacks, including Archie Lee, emigrated to British Columbia. The majority settled on Saltspring Island, where their descendants live to this day. [19]

COMMODORE's regular sailings to Victoria were followed by other steamers. In July 1858, Wright purchased another Nicaragua Route veteran, the steamer **PACIFIC**, for the service. In all, between 1858 and 1859 there were 105 steamer arrivals at San Francisco from British Columbia. **COMMODORE** went out of service in 1858, however. **COMMODORE** was nearly lost in July 1858 while running from San Francisco to Victoria. Steaming from San Francisco on July 8 with 250 passengers and 800 tons of freight, **COMMODORE** ran into heavy weather and began to leak just two days out. Described as "lying in the trough of the sea, helpless," with the water a foot away from the boiler fires, **COMMODORE** was in danger of sinking. Captain George W. Staples threw cargo overboard, and set the passengers to bailing and pumping. One pump failed, the steam pipe cracked, and the boilers shifted in their beds as the steamer rolled in the waves. Captain Staples gave orders to shoot and throw overboard the twenty horses aboard the ship, while the engineers worked on the damaged pump. It was repaired, and as the water was slowly being freed from the hull, a fresh breeze came up. Putting sail on and turning about, Staples drove **COMMODORE** before the wind and back to San Francisco, where she arrived on July 14. [20] The damaged and battered steamer was sold by Wright to the California Steam Navigation Company.

The new owners rebuilt the ship, sending her to the U.S. Navy's drydock at Mare Island on San Francisco Bay. Newspaper reports noted that "she has been thoroughly overhauled and refitted throughout. Forty thousand dollars or thereabouts, have been spent on her. She has been strengthened in every possible way and is not if anything stancher than the day she was first launched." [21] Renamed BROTHER JONATHAN, the steamer re-embarked on the north coast trade to Oregon and Washington ports in March 1859.

BROTHER JONATHAN first brought news to Oregon of the territory's admission to statehood on that voyage when she arrived at Portland on March 15, 1859. [22] The steamer continued to call at northern ports for the next six years, although her ownership changed in August 1860 when she was sold to the Oregon & San Diego Steamship Line of Samuel J. Hensley. Occasionally steaming from San Francisco to southern California ports, BROTHER JONATHAN and her running mate PACIFIC more regularly operated on the northern run. "The ships of these companies were literally the commercial arteries of the Pacific Coast economy, carrying vital products of mine, forest, farm and factory to expanding consumption centers extending from California to British Columbia." [23] The trade with Oregon was so busy that "cargoes piled up at the terminal to such an extent that the Oregon-bound steamers were compelled to leave considerable tonnage behind on each voyage." [24] The burden of the trade was such that in May 1861 BROTHER JONATHAN was hauled out at North's Shipyard on San Francisco's North Beach for a rebuild.

BROTHER JONATHAN returned to service on the San Francisco-Portland-Victoria run in December 1861 as "the new and splendid steamship BROTHER JONATHAN built expressly for this route with unequalled accommodations for passengers and freight." [25] In this last stage of her career, BROTHER JONATHAN also participated in the 1861-1862 rush for gold on Idaho's Salmon River. The discovery of gold in what would become Idaho and Montana in summer of 1860 led to a rush to those areas, reached by navigating the upper reaches of the Columbia River. A fierce winter in 1861-1862 disrupted the rush, but by the spring of 1862 it was back on. BROTHER JONATHAN's regular sailings up the Columbia brought large numbers; on one voyage alone, the steamer carried nearly a thousand gold seekers to Portland, the jumping off point for the mines. [26] Gold rush boom voyages notwithstanding, BROTHER JONATHAN operated for the next three and a half years without serious incident, except for a collision with the barque JANE A. FALKENBERG on the Columbia River in June 1865 resulted in some damage that was repaired in San Francisco.

THE WRECK OF BROTHER JONATHAN

BROTHER JONATHAN sailed from San Francisco on July 28, 1865 under the command of Captain Samuel J. DeWolf, with 244 passengers and crew and a large freight that allegedly overloaded the steamer. The cargo included an ore crusher and Arriving off Crescent City on the afternoon of July 30, BROTHER JONATHAN was wrecked off St. George Reef, also known as the Dragon's Teeth, on a submerged pinnacle now known as "Jonathan Rock."

According to the quartermaster, one of the few survivors,

I took the helm at twelve o'clock. A northwest gale was blowing and we were four miles above Point St. George. The sea was running mountains high and the ship was not making headway. The captain thought it best to turn back to Crescent City and wait until the storm had ceased. I ordered the helm hard aport. I obeyed and it steadied her. I kept on due east. This was about 12:45. When we made Seal Rock the captain said southeast by south. It was clear where we were, but foggy and smoky ashore. We ran until 1:50 when she struck with great force, knocking the passengers down and starting the deck planks. The captain stopped and backed her, but could not move the vessel an inch. She rolled about five minutes, then gave a tremendous thump and part of the keel came alongside. By that time the wind and sea had slewed her around until her head came out of the sea and worked off a little. Then the foremast went through the bottom until the yard rested on deck. [27]

Six lifeboats were launched, but only one made it away from the ship. The others were crushed or capsized.

The boat that made it away carried nineteen people; third mate James Patterson, ten crew, and five women and three children. [28] Quartermaster Jacob Yates, in the lifeboat, reported "as we came around the stern we saw a boat swamped which was full of women; and one boat capsized, with a man on her bottom, and also another one stove to pieces. Our boat was so full we could not take another soul in it." [29]

Within 30 to 45 minutes after striking, BROTHER JONATHAN sank. A number of the passengers and crew remained below and went down; others struggled on the water but drowned. Among the passengers were a number of prominent citizens; Anson C. Henry, Governor of the Washington Territory, Brig.Gen. George Wright, newly named commander of the Army's Department of the Columbia, and James Nesbit, editor and part owner of the San Francisco DAILY EVENING BULLETIN were all lost. Also drowned were Victor Smith, former Collector of Customs at Puget Sound, and Captain Chaddock of the Revenue Cutter Joseph Lane. News of the disaster quickly spread up and down the coast and back east, where it received headlines in Washington, D.C. and New York. In terms of lives lost, and the social impact of the near-complete loss of life and the many prominent citizens among the dead, the wreck of BROTHER JONATHAN was the worse maritime disaster in California history, and one of the worse shipwrecks on the Pacific Coast.

A \$200,000 Army payroll, \$80,000 in specie, and other monies were also lost. Forty-five bodies and loose wreckage drifted ashore after the wreck, but despite several searches inspired by the lost money aboard the ship, the wreck of BROTHER JONATHAN was not discovered until 1993. The bodies recovered from the sea were buried ashore; they were later relocated and a special cemetery was established in Crescent City. The site is now a California Registered Landmark.

FOOTNOTES, SECTION 8

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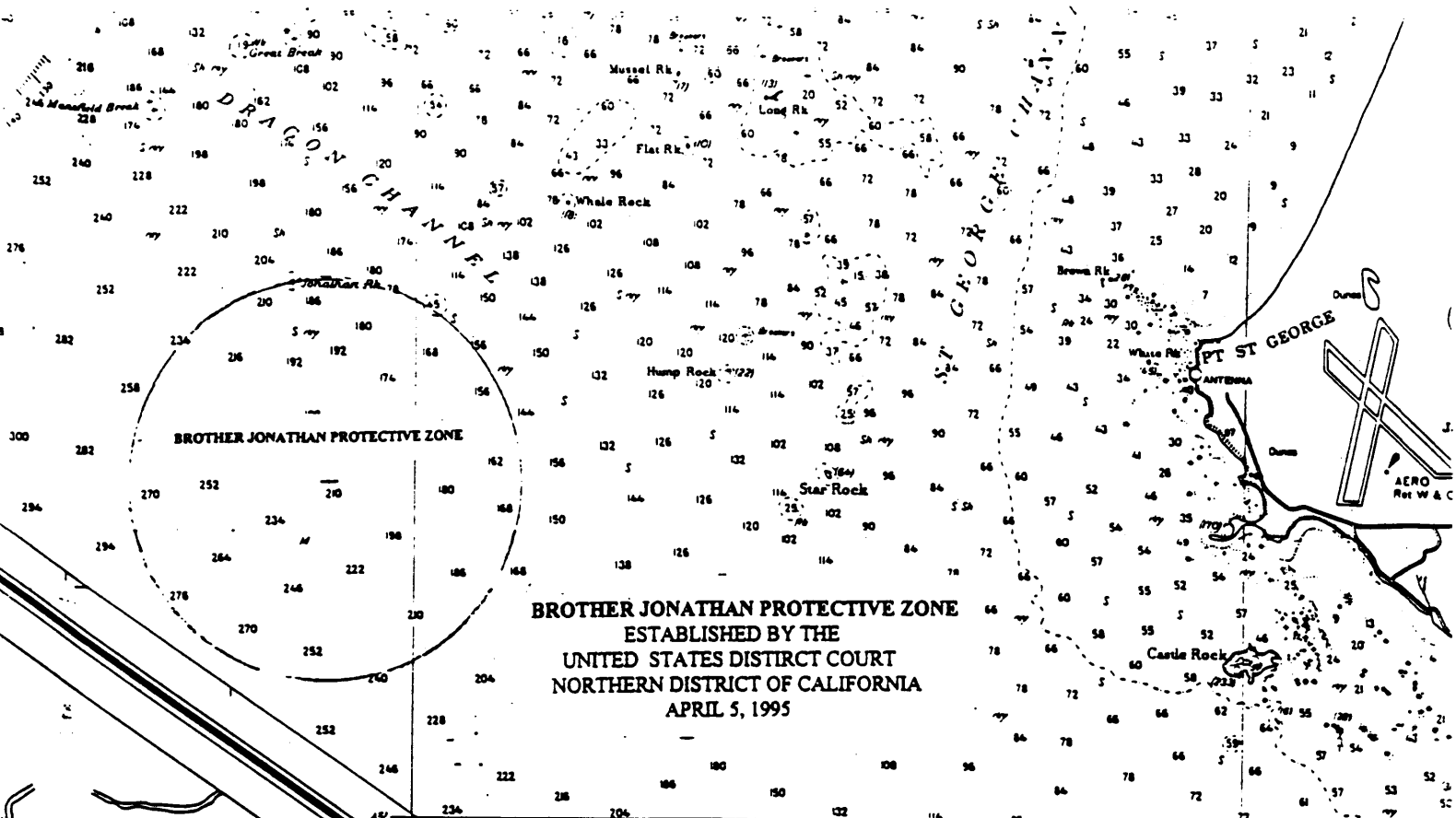
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SECTION 10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Brother Jonathan
Del Norte, California

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The actual site of the shipwreck Brother Jonathan comprises the area of a circle from the center of the wreckage extending out approximately 300 feet. The 19.5 acre site (a circle with a radius of 5,200 feet with a center point at coordinates 41 degrees, 46 minutes, 29 seconds, North Latitude, by 124 degrees, 20 minutes, 50 seconds, West Longitude) is the area of a protective zone established by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, in the case of *Deep See Research v. Brother Jonathan*, No. C 91 3899 LCB. The exact location of the Brother Jonathan wreck site is known to only a few individuals who have declined to reveal it even to the Court. They have provided the above coordinates to the Court, but the center point of those coordinates is not necessarily the actual location. Attached hereto is the sworn Declaration of Mark Barnum which attests that the wreck is within the protective circle.



BROTHER JONATHAN PROTECTIVE ZONE
 ESTABLISHED BY THE
 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
 APRIL 5, 1995

